

laughter lines

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Summary: [all he needs is a laugh track and while he's at it he might just be his own.] hades reminisces and laughs. inspired by 5x16. angsty, hades x zelena oneshot.

laughter lines

hello! this is a mess, be forewarned. i don't normally write on fanfiction, just read, but i have (conveniently erased my past account) and started a new one! also, the latest ouat episode (5...something?) inspired me. hades and zelena make me swoon while simultaneously making me want to throw my shoe at the screen. hades is my favorite villain - besides regina, who's more like an ex-villain - in the show. i dunno, maybe it's the tragic backstory?

>anyway, enough of my blabbing.<br>i hope this does him justice; sorry for any ooc bits and grammar errors - this was a middle-of-the-night sort of piece. i did take some liberties, in that i assumed that hades was the middle child of three (zeus, hades, poseidon) and that the group of them were enchanted-forest dwellers, not in-the-middle-of-greece dwellers during their younger days. the timeline's a bit iffy. also, i use far too many absolutes. please enjoy! any and all reviews are greatly appreciated.

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><p>Hades had perfect skin for as long as he could remember. It was absolutely pristine, infinitely <em>divine</em>.<br>>(They say he doesn't have a sense of humor; he glibly begs to differ.) Of course, Poseidon <em>did</em> have skin marginally better than his, but that was to be expected. After all, seaweed and salt water and - maybe it was the leeches, or were they freshwater dwellers? Zeus, though - completely different story. Obviously a little - clearly mistaken - birdie told him something about the "benevolent father" look, and he'd never let go of that apparition,

nor his quest to obtain it.

>Hah. Hades grimaced. As if his deceitful, perpetually and  
<em>infuriatingly</em> lucky brother could be described as  
"benevolent". "Out of all the adjectives in the world, he just had to  
fit that one," he muttered.

>It did mean that Zeus's face was swimming in wrinkles, though. Hades  
always was the most delectable of the trio; the thought brings him no  
small measure of satisfaction. Of course, he had lines on his  
forehead, but they were from scheming; conniving was tough work, and  
of all the souvenirs he'd ever had, he couldn't say he'd ever minded  
these ones all that much.<br>He fingered the worn lines in his  
forehead absentmindedly. If this was a play in the theatre, he  
thought ruefully, it would be about time for him to gaze longingly  
off into the distance at some unforeseen object. Funny, he never had  
a propensity for dramatics - oh, who is he kidding, he is the  
comedian and the tragedist of the family, and he craved attention  
like nobody's business.

>Attention, it seemed, that his eyes never received. He can't  
remember the last time someone made direct eye contact with him, not  
since - well, her.<br>It didn't matter. After all, the skin by his  
eyes had remained disturbingly unmarred throughout the years.

\* \* \*

><p>He remembered the first time he smiled. Or, well - he likes to  
think that he does. Hades is not a man with forgetting in his  
extensive repertoire of tricks and tools, but this one particular  
memory evades him; yet he continues to refuse to admit that his  
powers of retention can only go so far.<br>He's heard it was when  
someone first told him he was a darling, the first time someone  
voluntarily reached out to stroke his face, meet his eyes, tried to  
covet him as if he was a doll and not an actual human being. Probably  
his mother.

>He's always had a penchant for pet names and petting.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>Zeus was the one permanently in stitches, Poseidon the stoic  
young brother (serious and stodgy and the complete opposite of what a  
younger child was supposed to be, but given the circumstances Hades  
can't say that he was ever surprised to see his younger brother  
develop the way he did). Hades has never known where to fall in  
between them. Part of him is disappointed, that they've already  
stolen the personality extremes from him before he even had a  
<em>chance</em> to speak up, dictating whom he will become; he has  
never stopped feeling frustrated that his story was in countless ways  
preordained before he's had a chance to alter it.

>Maybe, he muses, that's where he falls, a conglomerate of both of  
them, with his dry wit and caustic simmering anger. But he remembers  
one day - perhaps the only one - that the three of them were at peace  
with each other. Blissful. Happy. A far cry removed from <em>that  
day</em>, the one where Zeus took everything and Poseidon clung onto  
the shreds of what was left and Hades was the one left in the dust  
(literally; you would not believe how bad his allergies could get  
during springtime in Underbrooke).

>The picture of happiness is a foreign one to him now; the word, a  
strange and bitter combination on his lips (but hasn't it always  
been, he chuckles ruefully to himself. Hasn't it always been.) but  
that day - they felt like a family.<br>He vividly pictures three boys  
racing through fields, alternating winners until all of them tired of

the game and called the final race a tie, just to occupy themselves with a new pastime; playing king of the mountain on the rock formation in the lake nearby, so clear he could always see his reflection in it - and break the reflections of his brothers when he pushed them into the water (oh, the one and only time he was king of something that felt like it mattered); hiding and seeking, zigging and zagging in the forest until he dropped off from sheer exhaustion, the smile seemingly plastered on his face, his entire body throbbing with life and his eyes hurting from being crinkled so much; Zeus slinging him over his shoulders like an overprotective father, ensuring that he made it home to their cottage -

>He remembers. It would be a sin to forget.<br>Even through his drowsy haze, he could never erase that memory, when once upon a time him and Zeus and Poseidon were a family and they loved each other and breathing and feeling and laughing were so simple. So easy.

\* \* \*

><p>He's laughed countless times since then.<br>Since that day. \_

>He remembers Zeus stopping his heart, the overwhelming numbness that fled through his body, his frantic efforts to grasp onto something, *anything* that resembled emotion as it slipped through his fingers (like everything he'd ever wanted).

>"Good luck trying the true love thing," Zeus had casually remarked, a hint of a smile playing at his lips. "After all, I remember it never did fall through with that one girl. Can't remember her name, though."<br>He gritted his fingers and his mouth and even though the anger was never there he could still feel its shadow and he clings onto those remnants as he walks away.

>Part of him wonders how he'll find true love when he's never even known true happiness.<br>It's been years, eons, since then, and he's felt like the Beast in that movie some of the mortals talk about like it's legendary; the one where he's searching for a girl to break the spell on his heart, except there's no cartoons and no flower and no maiden to admonish him for his evils and no kitschy companions to tell him that everything will be alright. There's just him, and Zeus, and Cerberus, and emptiness, and a reign that feels more like a consolation prize than anything else.

>The thought made him laugh. But that laugh, and subsequent others, never reached his eyes, somehow falling short; like his laughter wasn't strong enough to carry all the way, mirth stopping somewhere between the beginning and the end of his face, scaring people along the way.<br>Maybe it's why Zeus grabbed Olympus before he even had the chance to blink, because he was scared, of the laughing middle boy whose smile seemed too painted on, too artificial to be real.

>Maybe it's why Cerberus still seems antsy, submissive, even when he looks away from the pet.<br>Even a monster is afraid of him, and it's telling.

>He wonders if anyone will ever see *him*. Even without emotion, objectively, he can feel that this is something he should want, something he does want.

>He laughs at it.<br>He laughs at himself, with himself, because his whole life is a fucking goddamn comedy and all he needs is a laugh track and while he's at it he might just be his own.

\* \* \*

><p>He's not sure why he felt like appearing in Oz that night. Well,

there were the theatrics, and the suspense, and he's been a man of panache for as long as he can remember. But he means one thing, and associates one thing only, with Oz - Zelena.<br>She is not, he will readily admit, the normal man's idea of beauty. Normal men like girls like Snow White, girls like Dorothy, save-the-world-while-sacrificing-incredible-amounts heroine figures.

>But then again, he has never been "normal" - never been quite sure of what exactly those six (six is the devil's number, but he is not the devil and maybe that is why he just <em>doesn't<em> \_understand\_ letters mean, or imply, or entail.

>No, it's the eyes. Something about the way she doesn't have laughter lines etched around them, like him.<br>The commonality is enough to stir - something - within him; not pity, definitely not - Zelena is, he can tell, a woman who is simultaneously stronger and more fragile than he could ever claim to be. He doesn't know - doesn't quite remember - what wanting feels like, but he supposes it begins like this, with a spark and a smile that shoots from his toes up to the tips of his impeccably groomed hair.

>All of a sudden, he is sixteen and bumbling and grotesquely optimistic, like when Mary, the prettiest girl in his village (she sold cloth, by the tavern, and it was that dark shade of red that complemented her dark brown eyes - they had branches and branches around them and she was only sixteen and Zeus just -) smiled at him.<br>Zelena doesn't smile.

>Or - she smiles like him, grimaces that look like upturned corners but somehow don't get to travel all the way to her eyes.<br>But she knows how to grin - has an intimate knowledge of the subject, he ascertains - and the first time she does, it is because of the bicycle, because of her wonderment and fascination and suddenly Hades cannot breathe and he is exhilarated and \_this is because of me\_ cannot stop ringing in his head -

>He remembers the bicycle ride as the first time he breathed - not literally, of course. For the first time that his entire body seemed to move and his heart left his chest and his pristine skin decided to crumple and <em>he was okay with it<em>.

\* \* \*

><p>If he had a camera - if Oz suddenly had film, or if he had known of pictures' existence at the time, he would have snapped infinite pictures of it, a way to capture the memory, to reassure himself that he was real and Zelena was real and he wasn't just imagining the past few moments.<br>Polaroid film, he knows, is insanely expensive (but what can he say, he is a man of fine tastes); for the sake of remembrance (for her sake) he would have bought it all. He would have found a way.

\* \* \*

><p>He can also remember <em>that day<em>, part two.

>All he can see sometimes is her frown, her walking away (ever vengeful, ever beautiful) - all he can hear is a sixteen year old boy who is pathetic, pitiful, utterly <em>disgusting<em>, who has no idea how to properly woo a woman and from that moment on he can hear his heart breaking.

>It's a crack only she can fix; he's wondered, if he took his heart out, if he would find her name etched upon it.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>He's saved the real ones for her. The smiles, that is.<br>Hades is a romantic, a dreamer (after all, he has to think of the \_big picture\_, one where he is Zeus and Zelena is his queen and happy endings aren't just a facade). He hopes that one day, she will be by his side, and he can finally age gracefully and let himself \_go\_, he can let his laughs form crows' feet around his eyes.

\* \* \*

><p>He laughs while he cries.<br>"It's not that it \_was\_ for you," he gasps, clutching his side, "but that it \_is.\_"<br>>The lost souls beckon to him; they whisper that Hades, too, is part of their decay, can share in it as well.<br>He offers them a smile.

End  
file.